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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6861
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4092
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1411
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1341
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3660
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4053
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8577
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 000810

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STATE FOR WHA A/S SHANNON AND PDAS SHAPIRO
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NSC FOR DFISK
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: MORALES ACCUSES U.S. OF BEING BEHIND DEADLY
BOMBINGS

REF: A. LA PAZ 801
[1](#)B. LA PAZ 803
[1](#)C. LA PAZ 734

Classified By: Ambassador David N. Greenlee for reasons 1.4d and b.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The deadly bombings in downtown La Paz late March 21 appear to be the isolated handiwork of a mentally unstable U.S. citizen and his Uruguayan partner (refs A and B). But that hasn't stopped observers in Bolivia's political cauldron from speculating wildly about the hidden political motivations behind the crime. President Morales, in a provocative but (we believe) calculated outburst that has further fueled speculation, accused the U.S. of being behind these "terrorist attacks," while Foreign Minister Choquehuanca claimed neo-liberal conspirators were seeking to destabilize Bolivia's democracy. The Ambassador called Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera March 22 to express concern about the irresponsible GOB reaction, and the Embassy has halted all high-level contact with government officials, including cancelling a scheduled meeting to discuss the VP delegation's planned visit to Washington (ref C). If the President's remarks reflect a deeper truth about his attitude toward the U.S., this unfortunate crime could foreshadow a tipping point in our bilateral relations. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The bombings of two budget hotels in downtown La Paz late March 21, in which two people were killed and at least seven others injured, appear to be the handiwork of a psychologically unstable American citizen and his Uruguayan wife or girlfriend (ref A and B). The 25-year-old American citizen suspect, who carries a U.S. passport under the name "Lestat Claudius De Orleans y Montevideo," entered Bolivia several weeks ago after being expelled from Argentina (where he served a six-month jail term for blowing up an ATM) and reportedly after being refused entry into Peru. It is not known whether Bolivian immigration officials allowed De Orleans y Montevideo to enter Bolivia with his legitimate U.S. Passport or with his "World Services Authority" passport, a document that (to our knowledge) is not recognized by any country. (Note: He reportedly has a legitimate Bolivian visa in the fantasy "world" document.

End Note.) A special Bolivian police investigative unit arrested both suspects immediately after the second, smaller blast went off. The evidence against De Orleans y Montevideo, who has confessed to his role, is apparently all but conclusive.

13. (SBU) Notwithstanding the manifestly isolated and apolitical nature of the crime, the bombs exploded in a highly charged Bolivian environment and have ignited a firestorm of speculation concerning their supposedly political motivation. One close Embassy contact, for example, believed the bombs were the work of Cuban and Venezuelan agents aiming to destroy relations between the U.S. and Bolivia. Others have sought to elevate their own political status by claiming to have been the intended targets. In a March 22 meeting with Embassy officers, Vice Minister of Labor Miguel Albarracin Paredes said he lived less than two blocks away from the bombed hotels, and let the subsequent pregnant pause suggest the rest.

14. (SBU) President Evo Morales further fueled the irresponsible speculation by publicly accusing the U.S. of being behind the attacks. "The Government of the United States fights against terrorism and then sends Americans to commit terrorist acts in Bolivia," Morales said, "These attacks are a provocation against democracy, the Bolivian government and... the Constituent Assembly." Morales then reiterated his pledge never to enter into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S. (Morales spoke out while in Santa Cruz kicking off the Venezuela-sponsored campaign to provide identity documents to rural Bolivians, so Venezuelan advice about "how best to respond" cannot be ruled out as having shaped the flavor and content of the President's

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remarks.) Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca also joined the fray, publicly claiming that "neo-liberal" conspirators had planted the bombs to derail the MAS Government's democratic experiment.

15. (C) Far from an unfiltered emotional reaction to a terrible crime, the President's outbursts appear to reflect a studied political calculation. We understand Morales received a detailed briefing in the early morning of March 22 regarding the progress of the police investigation. When they briefed Morales, police already had De Orleans y Montevideo in custody, knew about his unbalanced mental condition, that he had committed a similar crime in Argentina but had entered Bolivia legally, and that he had somehow acquired a legitimate Bolivian license to sell explosives. Morales first made his polemical remarks around noon March 22 -- over six hours after he had received the police briefing -- and he repeated them in slightly toned down form later the same afternoon. Some observers suggest that Morales' outburst was intended to placate hard-line supporters who viewed his supposed rapprochement with the U.S. -- evidenced by Morales' lunch meeting with the Ambassador the previous week -- as an unwelcome sign that Bolivia continued to capitulate to "imperial" pressures. Others see it as providing concrete justification for the government's covert plan, supported by Cuba and Venezuela, to organize popular militias that will defend Bolivia against such foreign "terrorist" attacks in the future -- a plan the President referred to in his comments by calling on his social sector bases to organize themselves into self-defense committees.

16. (C) The Ambassador called Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linera the afternoon of March 22 to express deep concern about the irresponsible GOB reaction, and to advise him that this would likely have consequences. Garcia Linera agreed that the President's remarks had been unhelpful. Embassy officers then cancelled scheduled meetings with high-level government officials, explaining that the timing had become "inconvenient." This included a meeting with VP Garcia and Foreign Minister Choquehuanca, set for the early morning of March 23, in connection with the GOB delegation's proposed

trip to Washington to discuss soy and other economic issues (ref).

¶7. (C) Comment: If President Morales' intemperate remarks reflect a "deeper truth" about his political attitudes and intentions toward the U.S., it turns out that chance may have dealt destiny a blow in this case. That is, an unfortunate crime, that by sheer happenstance was perpetrated by a U.S. citizen, could foreshadow a crucial tipping point in our broader relations with the current Bolivian government.
GREENLEE